



U.S. Department of Justice

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NEWS SUMMARY: Oconto County Resident Convicted of Defrauding the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

United States Attorney Steven M. Biskupic announced today that Keith A. Roberts (DOB: 4/13/48) of Gillett, Wisconsin, was convicted on November 8, 2006, after a three-day jury trial before United States District Judge William C. Griesbach. The jury convicted Roberts on five counts of falsifying his claim for VA benefits between 1994 and 2004. He faces up to 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on two counts, and up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on the remaining three counts.

On September 12, 2005, a federal grand jury returned the five-count indictment charging Roberts with devising a scheme to defraud the VA, and executing the scheme through electronic funds transfers paid by the United States Treasury to Roberts' Wisconsin bank account.

The indictment alleged that Roberts falsified his role in the attempted rescue of an airman killed at Naval Air Facility Naples on February 4, 1969. Roberts was an airman stationed at the same base. He was discharged from active duty in 1971. Over 25 years later, in December 1994, Roberts claimed that the airman's death caused Roberts to suffer post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In 1999, the VA granted his claim retroactive to 1992 and began making monthly payments to Roberts' bank account. Between direct payments to Roberts, and education benefits for his children, Roberts was paid over \$355,000 in VA benefits to which he was not entitled.

John W. Brooks, Special Agent-in-Charge of the VA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in Chicago offered the following comments on the case: "We are always mindful of, and thankful for, the many great sacrifices by the men and women of the military, both past and present, especially whenever our nation celebrates Veterans Day. The VA Office of Inspector General is mindful that fraudulent claims which take money from deserving veterans cannot be tolerated. While unfortunate, this trial was necessary. As the jury correctly found, such fraudulent claims will not be tolerated."

United States Attorney Biskupic echoed those comments: "We owe a great debt to all those who serve in the armed forces. Those who suffer as a result of that service deserve our attention and assistance. We cannot allow fraudulent claims to diminish their sacrifice or the resources available for their support."

The case was investigated by Special Agents Ray Vasil and Joe Cossairt of the VA OIG in Chicago. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Timothy Funnell of the Eastern District of Wisconsin, Green Bay Division.

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